

1. The Big Picture

GNA reforms to defuse tensions in run-up to ceasefire talks

The week starting 31st Aug was marked by a series of reforms enacted by the Government of National Accord (GNA) to defuse tensions against the backdrop of nationwide mass protests, most notably across Tripoli.

As anticipated in our last weekly report, the anti-government protests have lost momentum in Tripoli, but continued in the form of nationwide pro-Gaddafi mobilisations and relatively smaller demonstrations over power cuts in Tajoura, Misrata, and Tobruk. The Attorney General issued arrest warrants against suspects accused of shooting protesters across the capital on 28 Aug, and a dozen protesters have already been released while others are being held for further questioning.

The reform package included a 2 billion LYD allocation to municipalities and a Presidential Council (PC) decree approving a new system for local revenue collection and expenditure. The move was described as an important milestone towards local governance, although critics continue to express skepticism over implementation and next steps, highlighting the potential for armed groups to engage in extortion attempts to take hold of the funds.

More importantly, GNA PM Fayeze Sarraj reinstated Interior Minister Fathi Bashagha after a hearing held at the PM's Office in Tripoli on 03 Sep. In response, Bashagha confirmed that all state security institutions work under the leadership of the PC and noted his compliance with the probe, as well as his respect for hierarchy and institutions under the rule of law. The hearing was not public as requested by Bashagha. Sarraj reinstating Bashagha did not come as a surprise to observers; the development confirmed the minister's influence in western Libya.

It remains unclear if Bashagha will continue to take a bold stance against "militias" across the western region. Some observers argue armed factions opposed to the Interior Minister likely feel emboldened across the western region as the GNA will be reluctant to press ahead with security-sector reforms in the current context of political divisions.

However, the political fallout from the protests is far from over. Key issues related to power/water cuts and perception of corruption are yet to be resolved. The GNA remains under pressure to introduce broader structural reforms, especially restructuring the PC. With this context in mind, popular unrest and flashpoints are likely to increase in the medium term because the GNA response has likely raised local perception of the effectiveness of mass mobilization in introducing change. It should be noted that political instability is not

exclusive to the western region and is also high in the east.

In relation to Tripoli's security environment, WB recorded a relative uptick in robberies and carjacking incidents this week. Meanwhile, sources reported unidentified gunmen shot dead four Turkey-backed Syrian fighters aboard a military vehicle on Al-Kabeer Street at approximately 1500hrs on 31 August. A day later, a suspected suicide bomber detonated a device reportedly strapped to his motorbike at approximately 0730hrs near Gheiran Roundabout, Janzour. Despite speculation as to the motive and identity of the attacker, local security forces are yet to publish official investigation findings. Unconfirmed reports allege the attacker was a Nawasi Brigade member and the incident was fuelled by recent political tensions involving Bashagha.

On the diplomatic front, stakeholders are attempting to build on the recent ceasefire momentum to reach a settlement between GNA PM Fayeze Sarraj and House of Representatives (HoR) Speaker Aguila Saleh. Italian Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio visited both Sarraj and Saleh this week for consultations. Di Maio was received by the HoR Speaker in Al-Qubba. According to HoR spokesman Abdallah Belhaiq, Saleh called on the EU to impose the ceasefire and neutralise oil revenues by depositing funds in a frozen account overseas until a unified authority is established in Libya.

However, it should be noted that attempts to reach a settlement, including the rapprochement between Sarraj and Saleh, can be perceived by Haftar as a threat. The LNA commander, who has lost political clout after the Tripoli offensive, continues to consolidate the LNA's defensive lines across Sirte-Jufra. Haftar would be in favour of renewed combat engagement in the central and/or southern regions to offset the risk of being sidelined from - and delay - any future political deal.

Of course, appetite for an all-out escalation is low both among LNA and GNA backers, but skirmishes and pre-emptive strikes are possible and would be justified on a defensive basis. Of note, the week was marked by multiple accusations of ceasefire violations against the LNA. Meanwhile, the build-up of forces continued in the central region while LNA forces conducted reconnaissance missions and mobile patrols across Libya's south.



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KEY POINTS

- GNA PM reinstates Interior Minister
- Political talks scheduled in Geneva
- LNA military manoeuvres in central region & south

2. National Security Map

GNA accuses LNA of violating ceasefire west Sirte; PFG denies NOC Ras Lanuf incident

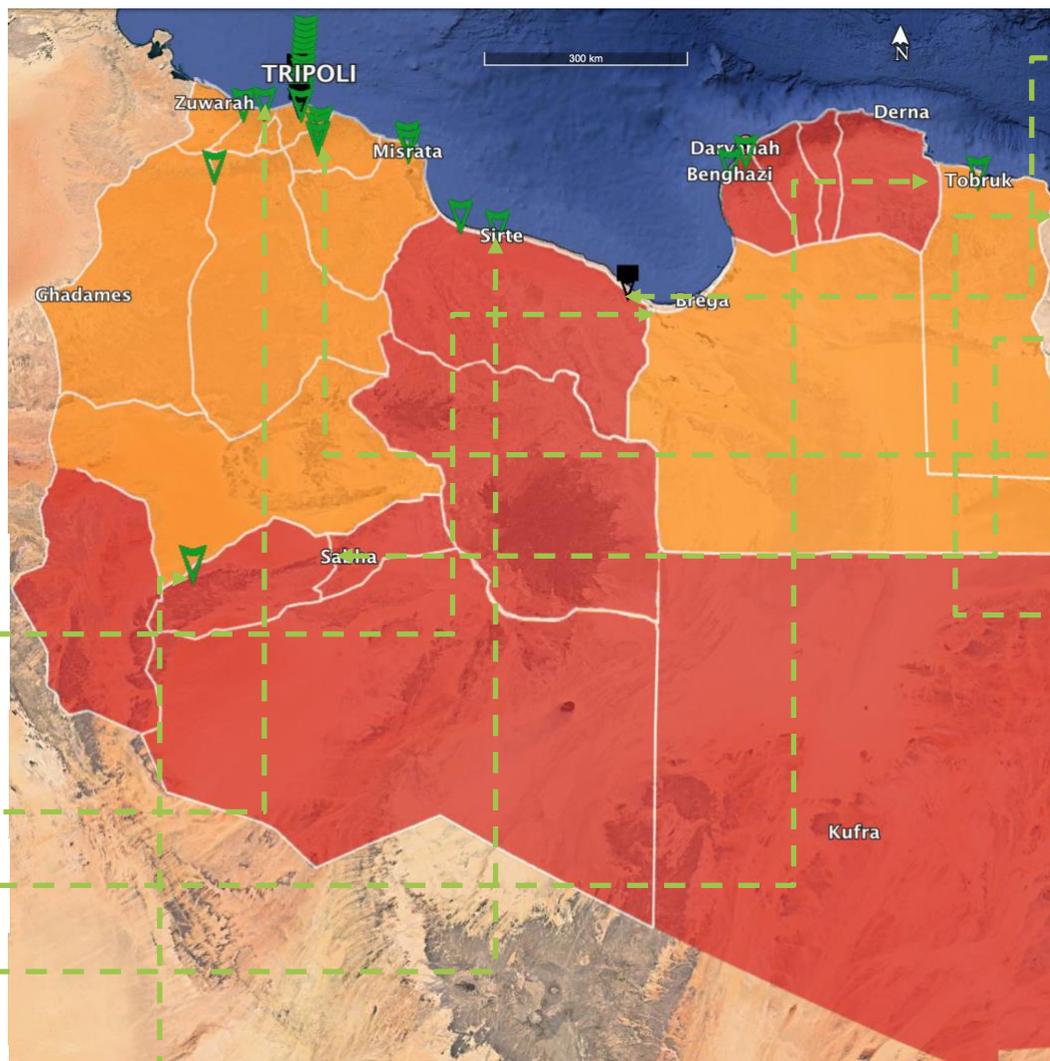
Key

THREAT INDICATORS

- Severe Threat
- High Threat
- Moderate Threat

EVENT INDICATORS

- IED | VBIED | ERW
- Violent Clash
- Isolated Gunfire
- Other



On 04 September, the National Oil Corporation (NOC) reported a Comoros-registered vessel, Mohamed Bey, was scheduled to enter Ras Lanuf Port at 1100hrs on 04 September to load scrap, though eastern Petroleum Facilities Guard (PFG) armed men, including foreign mercenaries, forced the ship into port and fired intimidation shots and rocket propelled grenades (RPGs) rounds at the vessel's crew at 0200hrs. PFG commander Najji Al-Maghrabi denied the NOC's report.

Sabha International Airport's (SEB) is scheduled to resume operations on 09 Sep, as per a letter by head of Libyan Airports Authority (LAA) Mohamed Bait Al-Mal.

Reports indicate a body was recovered from a mass grave in Tarhuna on 02 September.

The Mesaieed Egypt-Libya border crossing reopened on 01 Sep with new social distancing measures. The reopening would follow a decision by eastern authorities to reopen ports of entry/exit. Libyan nationals between 18 to 45 years old entering Egypt have to register in municipalities across Tobruk, Bi'r al Ashhab and Musaid. Egyptian nationals entering Libya are required to present a valid PCR test within 48 hours of entry date.

At approximately 0006hrs on 02 September, the GNA's Sirte-Jufra Security Operations Room claimed that LNA forces attempted to target their positions with six grad missiles west Sirte, describing the incident as another violation of the ceasefire agreement.

Open Source flight-tracking software indicates two Turkish Air Force C-130 landed at Al-Wattiyah airbase on 31 August. A third Turkish cargo aircraft was also tracked entering Libyan airspace.

GNA military spokesman Mohamed Gnonou reported the Intelligence and Information Analysis Unit monitored the movement of an LNA armed convoy transporting a Russian-made Pantsir anti-aircraft system from Ajdabiya to Marsa Al-Brega, with its final destination expected to be either Ras Lanuf or Sirte on 05 Sep.

Reports indicate dozens of Libyan employees working for a contractor protested their suspension in front of Mellitah Complex Oil and Gas (MOG) in the morning on 05 September. The employees called on the National Oil Corporation (NOC) to intervene and resolve the issue.

At approximately 0100hrs on 05 September, Tobruk locals burned tyres and closed off several roads due to deteriorated living conditions in the city.

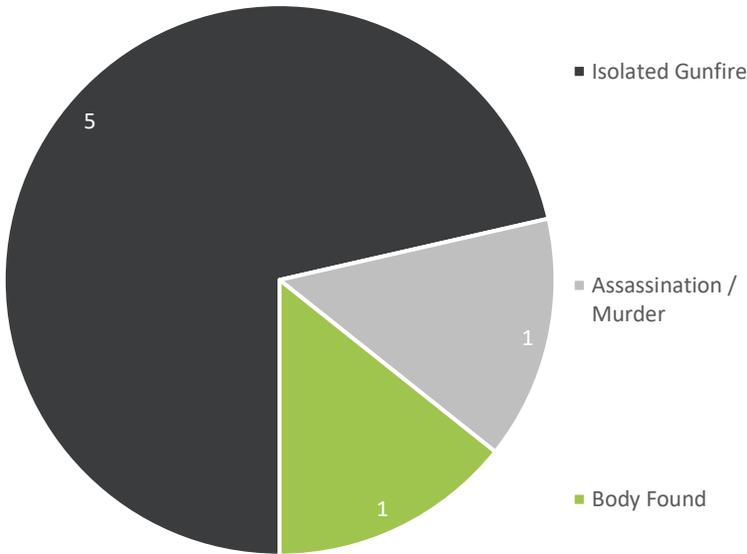
Alleged Sudanese Janjaweed militias raided a house and stole vehicles in Sirte in the evening on 04 September. Sirte's residents captured the perpetrators and killed them in an act of retaliation.

LNA accounts reported joint patrols by the 128 Brigade Group, 628 Infantry Battalion, Khalid Ibn Walid Battalion, and 116 Infantry Battalion, in the Murzuq Basin on 01 Sep. The patrols extended from Sharara oil field to El-Feel passing by Awbari and Ghat.

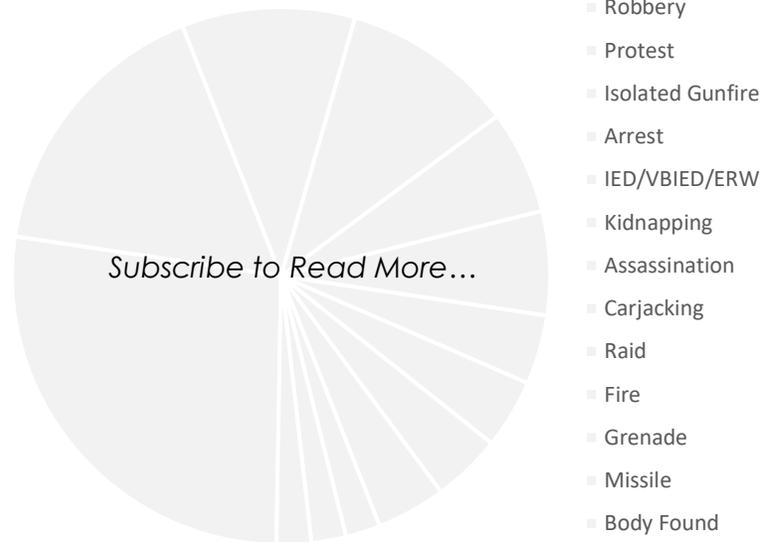
3. Nationwide Security Analysis

Vehicle robberies on upward trend in Tripoli

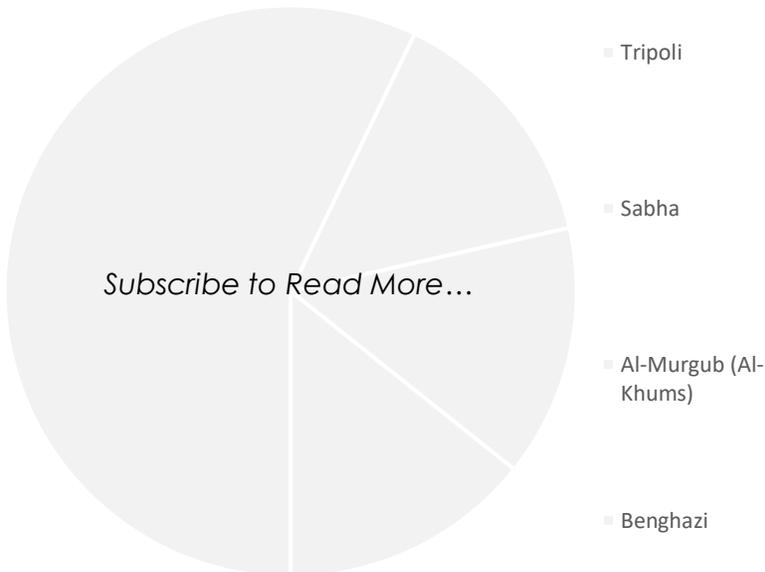
Nationwide fatalities by type of attack (Past week)



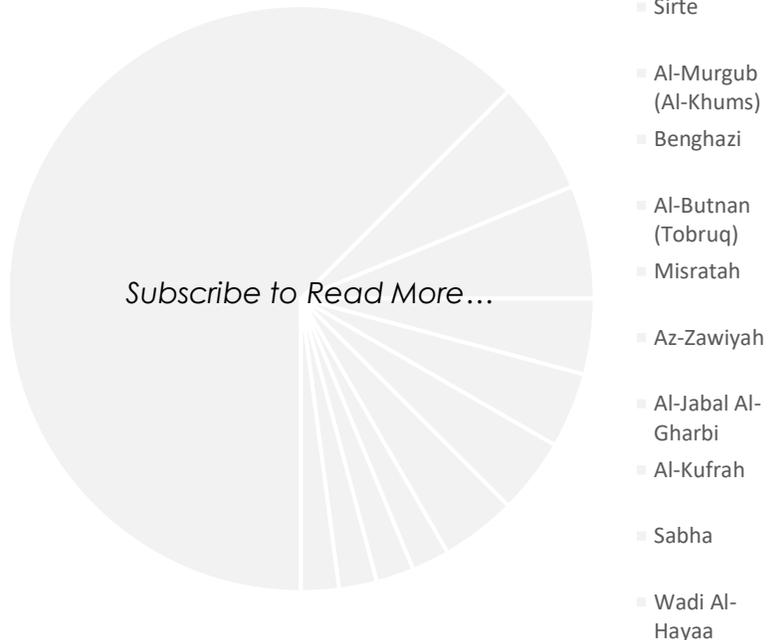
Nationwide incidents by type of attack (Past week)



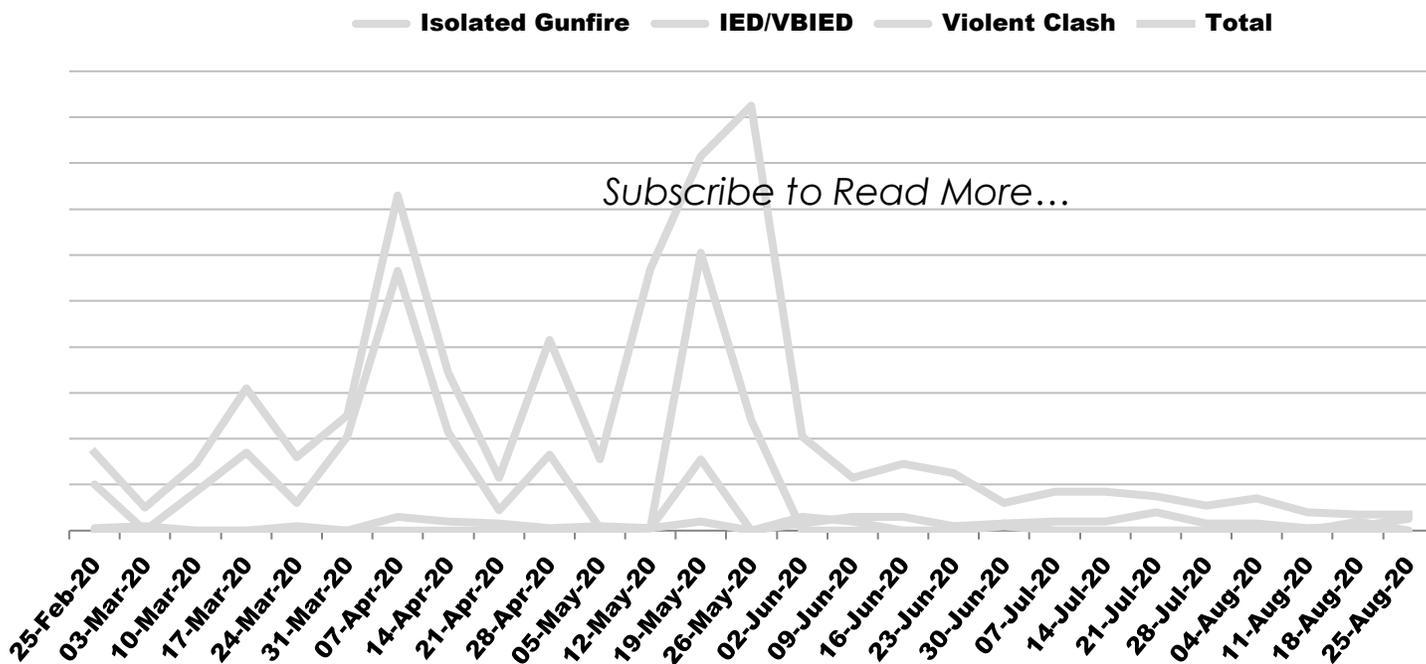
Nationwide fatalities by national district (Past week)



Nationwide incidents by national district (Past week)



Nationwide Fatalities by Type of Attack (Past 27 Weeks)



Data Analysis

WB recorded this week a total of 7 confirmed deaths in Libya compared with 18 deaths reported last week and 8 the week before. The fatalities recorded this week came as a result of isolated gunfire cases in Tripoli and Sabha resulting in five fatalities, a body found in Tarhuna, and an act of murder in Benghazi. In Tripoli, WB sources reported gunfire in Tripoli's Edraiby area at approximately 1500hrs on 31 August. Unidentified gunmen shot dead four Turkey-backed Syrian fighters aboard a military vehicle on Al-Kabeer Street. There are no further details. Meanwhile in Sabha, reports indicate celebratory gunfire in commemoration of the 51st anniversary of the former regime's 01 September 1969 Revolution resulted in the death of a university security guard and four other injuries in Sabha at night on 31 August. In Tarhuna, reports indicate a body was recovered from a mass grave in Tarhuna on 02 September. According to reports, the body was recovered alongside a ventilator. No further details. Beyond in Benghazi, reports indicate a woman was shot dead by her spouse in an unidentified location in Benghazi in the morning on 28 August. Unconfirmed reports suggest the victim's spouse accidentally killed her and subsequently handed himself over to the police.

In the wider western region, the majority of incidents were recorded in the Tripoli district with a total of 30 incidents reported across the capital throughout the reporting period. WB recorded 13 robberies, 4 protests, 3 isolated gunfire cases, 3 IED/VBIED/ERW incidents, 2 arrests, 2 carjackings, 2 kidnappings, 2 raids 1 fire and 1 grenade. Beyond Tripoli, WB recorded 1 arrest in Jadu in the Jabal Al-Gharbi district, 1 arrest, 1 robbery and case of a body found in Tarhuna located in the Al-Murgub district, 1 kidnapping in Sabratah, 1 robbery in Al-Zawiya, in addition to two protests in Misrata.

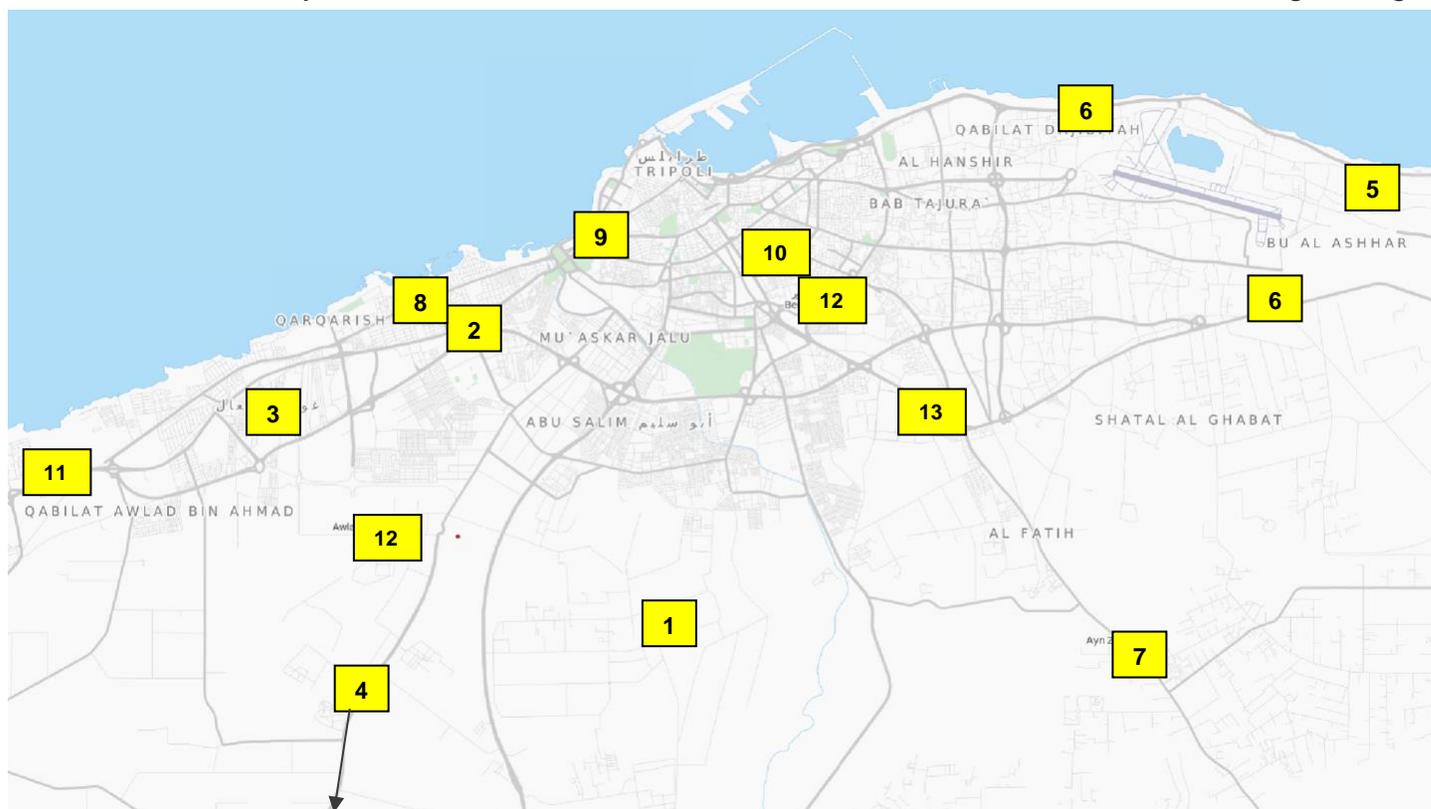
Meanwhile, in the central region and similar to GNA rhetoric over recent weeks, the GNA's Sirte-Jufra Security Operations Room claimed that LNA forces attempted to target their positions with six grad missiles west Sirte, describing the incident as another violation of the ceasefire agreement. The Room noted their readiness to respond to such attacks. There was no evidence on the ground to corroborate such claims. Separately, reports indicate Sudanese Janjaweed militias raided a house and stole vehicles in Sirte in the evening on 04 September. Sirte's residents captured the perpetrators and killed them in an act of retaliation. Of note, tensions remain high in Sirte after LNA-aligned forces were accused of committing various acts of crime targeting Sirte's residents, including Gdadfa tribesmen. The latter has led to a series of strong-worded statements from the Gdadfa tribe calling on its fellow tribesmen to cease all cooperation with the LNA and defect from its ranks. Beyond this, the National Oil Corporation (NOC) reported a Comoros-registered vessel, Mohamed Bey, was scheduled to enter Ras Lanuf Port at 1100hrs on 04 September to load scrap, though eastern Petroleum Facilities Guards (PFG) armed men, including foreign mercenaries, forces the ship into port and fired intimidation shots and rocket propelled grenades (RPGs) rounds at the vessel's crew at 0200hrs. The Corporation reported the gunfire occurred in an area where highly flammable materials are stored. The NOC Chairman Mustafa Sanalla reported no casualties were recorded, though he warned that the "unacceptable behavior" could have led to a human and environmental disaster. Notably, the Corporation concluded its statement by calling for the replacement of the failing PFG." The latter was denied by the eastern PFG commander Najj Al-Maghrabi, referring to the claims as false allegations.

Turning to the south, WB recorded a total of three security incidents in Al-Kufra, Sabha and Wadi Al-Hayaa districts. In Al-Kufra, the Tebu Students Union at the University of Benghazi (Kufra branch) protested in front of the University's headquarters against the Interim Government and LNA commander Khalifa Haftar for depriving Tebu students from their right to education on 30 August. The protesters also denounced the transformation of the university to a military barracks for the Kufra Military Region. In a statement, the protesters held the Interim Government, Haftar, and particularly the Minister of Education responsible for the material and moral damage resulting from the arbitrary measures taken against the Tebu students. Separately in Sabha, reports indicate celebratory gunfire in commemoration of the 51st anniversary of the former regime's 01 September 1969 Revolution resulted in the death of a university security guard and four other injuries in Sabha at night on 31 August. Beyond in the Wadi Al-Hayaa district, the National Oil Corporation (NOC) reported the eastern PFG stormed Sharara Oilfield in violation of the restrictions imposed to curb the coronavirus pandemic, and subsequently transmitted the virus to a foreign worker resulting in his subsequent death.

In the eastern region, WB recorded a total of four security incidents in the east this week. In Benghazi, WB recorded one arrest and one murder. Meanwhile, in the Butnan district, WB recorded a fire and protest in the city of Tobruk. Similar to grievances voiced across the nation in recent weeks, residents of Tobruk burned tyres and closed off several roads against deteriorated living conditions in the city at approximately 0100hrs on 05 September.

4. Tripoli Neighborhood Report

Libyan suicide bomber detonates ivo Gheiran CP; Interior Minister alleged target



KEY INCIDENTS

1. (06 Sep) Explosive remnants of war (ERW) detonate in Al-Hadba Al-Mashro'
2. (06 Sep) Joint force presence at Al-Daran roundabout
3. (05 Sep) Vehicle theft ivo Ghut Shaal
4. (05 Sep) Military tank spotted on Al-Kreymiya's main road, no longer present one hour later
5. (05 Sep) Tajoura residents burn tyres at Asban roundabout to protest lengthy power cuts
6. (03 Sep) Vehicle thefts in Al-Bivio & Shat Rd.
7. (02 Sep) Deminers remove landmine in Ain Zara
8. (02 Sep) Attempted carjacking near Libya Oil Gas Station in Hai Al-Andalus, driver escapes
9. (01-03 Sep) Joint Force establish checkpoints at Tuesday Mall roundabout to inspect vehicles
10. (01 Sep) Josep Borrell received by GNA PM in Tripoli to discuss ceasefire efforts
11. (01 Sep) Libyan suicide bomber detonates near Gheiran roundabout
12. (01 Sep) Vehicle thefts in Ras Hssan & near World Islamic Call Society
13. (01 Se) Misrata militiamen raid Al-Furnaj Police Station to retrieve vehicle seized by police after being used in carjacking attempt

Suspected suicide attack near Gheiran CP

At approximately 0730hrs, a heavy explosion was reported in Janzur and Al-Serraj areas on 01 Sep. Reports indicate a militant detonated an IED while riding a motorcycle near Gheiran roundabout, after parking in the vicinity of Forsan Janzour's CP "Gheiran Checkpoint". Reports suggest that roads were blocked in the area following the explosion, while the coastal road remained open. Initial reports suggest that only the suicide bomber was killed in the incident. WB sources confirmed the coastal road in the area was open as of 0800hrs. Graphic images purported to show the attacker's decomposed body and fragments of the motorbike used in the attack. Conflicting reports suggest the IED was placed around the motorbike and not the attacker himself.

It is difficult to ascertain motive, especially given recent tensions between GNA armed formations and the suspension of GNA Interior Minister Fathi Bashagha. In all scenarios, the attack was opportunistic given low-capabilities and timing. There is evidence the attack was not designed to inflict mass casualties but to send a strong political message. Pro-LNA accounts alleged the attacker was Syrian, although these claims remain unsubstantiated.

Conflicting reports continue to circulate regarding the identity of the suspected militant that detonated an IED near Gheiran roundabout on 01 Sep. While there is much speculation about the attacker's identity, motive, and intent, credible local reports have emphasised the attacker was a Libyan national born in 1991 and identified as Ahmed Al-Naamy, a resident of the Souq Al Jum'aa area who recently stayed in Tunisia for approximately five months. Reports indicate

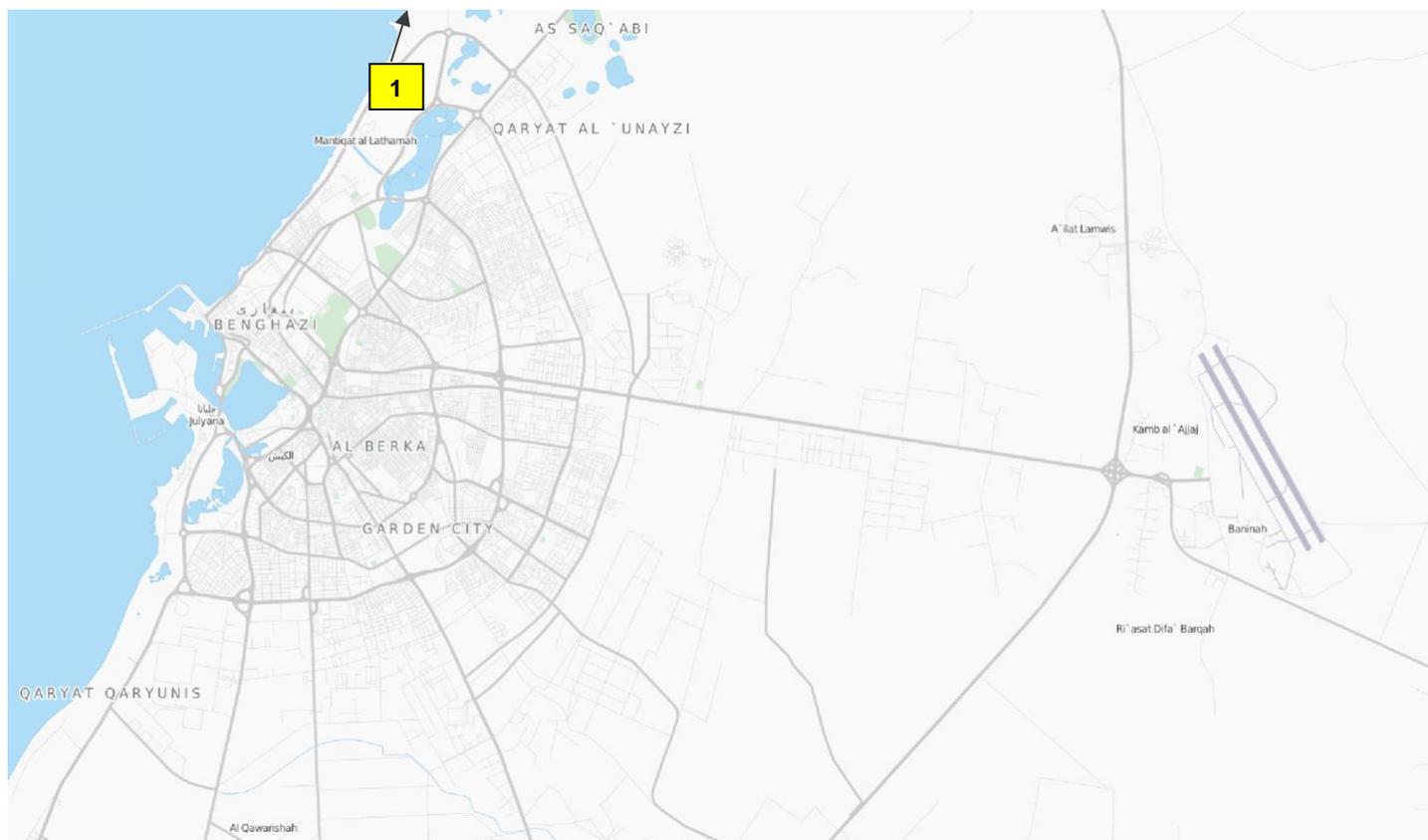
the Special Deterrence Force (SDF) raided Al-Naamy's house and official investigations are underway. A new unofficial theory has been presented by multiple local reports, corroborating intent to target GNA Interior Minister Fathi Bashagha. The attacker was reportedly a Nawasi Brigade member. According to the reports, one of the attacker's friends and fellow Nawasi Brigade member lent Al-Naamy his motorbike to travel back to Tripoli from Al-Zawiya where they had spent the night of 31 August together to source auto spare parts in Rabish Al-Harsha. Reports allege the motorbike was prepared for remote detonation and the attacker was tricked into targeting Bashagha. None of these claims have been corroborated to date and there is no imagery to authenticate the IED type. Whether the attacker knew of the device and intended to target Bashagha remains difficult to ascertain. Regardless, there is mounting evidence to rule out the involvement of the Islamic State (IS), and suggest the attack was indeed fuelled by recent disputes and tension involving the GNA Interior Minister. If the motive is confirmed, Bashagha could have been targeted either in his new office in the General Administration of Technical Affairs and Communications or the Palm City complex, where the Minister is said to reside on some occasions.

Syrian fighters shot dead; sources deny explosion

Gunfire was audible in the Edraiby area at approximately 1500hrs on 31 August. Unidentified gunmen shot dead four Turkey-backed Syrian fighters aboard a military vehicle on Al-Kabeer Street. Separately, pro-LNA accounts claimed locals carried out a tactical operation causing an explosion at Al-Yarmook Camp in the Khallat Al-Furjan area, allegedly killing 70 Syrian mercenaries in the afternoon on 31 August. However, sources denied that an explosion took place in the area.

5. Benghazi Neighborhood Report

Two Italian fishing boats intercepted & 15 crew members detained off Benghazi coast



KEY INCIDENTS

1. (04 Sep) LNA Navy Force detain 15 crew members after seizing two Italian fishing boats east of Benghazi
2. (02 Sep) Council of Ministers issue several decisions in 3rd regular meeting
3. (01 Sep) Pro-GNA accounts report skirmishes between Tariq Ibn Ziyad Brigade & Al-Awaqeer tribe

Italian crew members detained off coast

The LNA's Navy Force reported 15 vessel crew members were detained after two Italian fishing boats were intercepted 30 nautical miles north of Daryana, east of Benghazi, on 04 September. The detention came at the instructions of the LNA's commander Khalifa Haftar, who ordered crew to remain detained until Libyan athletes held in Italy were released in exchange. The LNA Navy Force stated that the incident came during a standard patrol conducted off the town of **Tocra**, were nine targets were spotted 30 nautical miles north of Daryana and were subsequently approached. The Italian fishing boats ignored warning calls by the LNA's Navy Force. two boats were seized, while the remaining managed to escape. The Force reported that this is not the first time such boats violate Libyan waters and warned of firm responses against any violators.

Council of Ministers hold 3rd regular meeting

On 02 September, the Interim Government's Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister Abdallah Al-Thinni held its third regular meeting of the year in Benghazi. The Council called on the Ministry of Social Affairs to provide essential supplies for internally displaced persons (IDPs) ahead of the winter season. In addition, the Municipal Council was requested to prepare the sanitation and rehabilitation of its council in anticipation of floods and other forms of natural disasters. The Council also issued a decision to enforce the wearing of masks and practice of social distancing in an effort to contain the coronavirus pandemic. In regard to the education sector, the

Government stressed the need to revise the academic curriculum, while restructuring the health sector across hospitals and medical centres. The Government also highlighted the importance of the police's role in ensuring locals are adhering to precautionary measures against the virus. Of note, the series of decisions issued by the Interim Government closely follows several decisions issued by the GNA Prime Minister Fayez Al-Serraj, aimed at alleviating local grievances across the capital city.

Alleged skirmishes b/w LNA forces & Al-Awaqeer

Pro-GNA accounts reported tensions escalated into skirmishes between Al-Awaqeer tribesmen and the LNA's Tarik Ibn Ziyad Brigade under Khaled Haftar's command, Khalifa Haftar's son, in an unidentified area of Benghazi at night on 01 September. The reports, if confirmed, would follow tensions between the tribe and the LNA amid land expropriation claims.

6. What's next

Skirmishes in south as GNA pushes to contain LNA influence

POLITICAL FORECAST

SECURITY FORECAST

Amid renewed diplomatic efforts to revive the UN-led political process and 5 + 5 Joint Military Commission (JMC) talks, stakeholders looking to secure their position in a future government can build on local opposition to foreign intervention to obstruct/steer the outcome of political negotiations. Meanwhile, the High Council of State (HCS) issued a statement regarding the participation of its representatives in the political talks held between the Council and the House of Representatives (HoR) hosted by Moroccan authorities in Morocco's Bouznika, between Casablanca and Rabat, on 06 September. In the statement, the Council noted that the consultations were held in the presence of the Moroccan Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita amid a "positive atmosphere" regarding the attempts to revise the political dialogue between the two sides. The statement also quotes Bourita during his participation in the first round of consultations noting his emphasis on the depth of the relationship between Libyan and Moroccan people and his country's keenness to solve the Libyan crisis by creating an atmosphere for Libyan dialogue to take place at their will. The Morocco talks are reportedly focused on a restructuring of institutions and downsizing of the PC from nine to three members each representing Libya's historic regions of Tripolitania, Fezzan, and Barqa. Separately, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan received GNA Prime Minister Fayez Al-Serraj in Istanbul on 06 September to discuss bilateral relations. The Turkish President stated the two sides held a "productive meeting" contributing to "peace, security and prosperity of the Libyan people." Erdogan reaffirmed his country's support of the GNA. Erdogan added that Libya's peace and security will benefit neighbouring countries, including Europe. The closed-door meeting also discussed boosting cooperation via mutual agreements aimed at "protecting Turkey's and Libya's rights in the eastern Mediterranean.

On the ground, it remains to be seen if the recent optimism and convergence between international actors will lead to a permanent ceasefire. While UN-led political talks are set to resume in Geneva in the short term, the demilitarization of Sirte/Jufra and resumption of oil and gas production remain shrouded in uncertainty. The anti-government protests that swept across Libyan cities throughout August have recently lost momentum. However, civilian movements are expected to continue calls for mobilisation in the medium term. Meanwhile, WB recorded an increase in crime including armed disputes, carjacking, kidnapping, and murders around Tripoli. Some incidents have been recorded in areas around downtown, Ben Ashour, Ras Hssan, Hai Al-Andalus, Bawabet Al-Jebs, Ghut Shaal, Al-Hae Al-Senaea and Tajoura. Of note, a carjacking was conducted in broad daylight on the highway. Elsewhere, WB recorded a slight uptick in crime in Zawiya and Garabolli. Across coastal cities, WB recorded a slight increase in human smuggling/irregular migration incidents, a trend consistent with the past few years. In Sirte, tensions remain high after LNA-aligned forces were accused of committing various criminal acts targeting Sirte's residents, including Gdadfa tribesmen. On 04 Sep, alleged Sudanese Janjaweed militias raided a house and stole vehicles in Sirte in the evening, prompting locals to retaliate and kill the perpetrators. In the central region, local reports confirmed the withdrawal of GNA forces from Ash Shwayrif, the strategic node linking the south, west, and central region. Meanwhile, in Qaryat, pro-LNA accounts reported a prisoner exchange between LNA and GNA forces in the evening of 06 Sep. In the southern region, LNA forces have increased reconnaissance sorties and mobile patrols across the Murzuq Basin. If the military build-up continues in the area, GNA forces backed by Turkey could launch targeted attacks in the medium term.

WHAT OTHER EXPERTS SAY

The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) Acting Head Stephanie Williams briefed the UN Security Council on the situation in Libya on 02 September. Williams stated that exploitation of oil as a weapon of war has dragged the country towards economic and social collapse, as well as increasing the misery of the Libyan people. Notably, Williams stated that Libya is at a "turning point" and warned over the key role the Council must play in preventing the country from greater fragmentation. Meanwhile, Williams noted that a current absence of direct confrontation in the country has allowed for rival forces to resupply, including weapons by foreign forces and their mercenaries. Williams also cited socio-economic issues fueling civil unrest across Libya's regions, noting fuel shortages impacting the electrical network. The Mission's acting head called for a full lifting of the oil blockade. In relation to the health sector, Williams assessed that the COVID-19 infection rate likely stands higher than government statistics. Besides local suffering on the ground, Williams noted the dire situation of refugees across detention centres in the country, and subsequently called on European powers to review their efforts in relation to the migration crisis. In addition, Williams called for revived efforts to crackdown on smugglers and traffickers. Williams called for a solidified agreement between rival parties in order to provide a stable basis for reforms to commence across the security sector, a return of government services, and economic regeneration. The Mission's acting head noted commitments received from regional actors and other governments, particularly from Tunisia, in regard to assisting the Mission in calming the situation on the ground. Meanwhile, Williams referred to the importance of safeguarding the "green shoots" of democracy from spoilers, and warned that "maximalist positions" on governance should be avoided. Further, Williams called for the reform of the banking sector in order to ensure the transparent management of public revenues, noting that the use of oil as a weapon of war has only alleviated local suffering and not brought down the state.

LIBYANS AND THE ARAB STREET

According to a report by independent sanctions monitors submitted to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Libya sanctions committee and cited by Reuters on 02 September, Russia has increased its logistical support for the Wagner Group private military contractors (PMCs) in Libya sent to support LNA forces. The report estimates 338 military cargo flights were operated from Syria to Libya in the nine months up to 31 July. According to the report, direct Russian military logistical support to the Wagner Group increased significantly from January to June 2020, with 338 suspicious flights from Syria operated by Russian military aircraft to Libya between 01 November 2019 and 31 July 2020. The report stated that the UN arms embargo on Libya remains completely ineffective, noting violations from other regional countries besides Russia. Of note, a confidential report revealed by Reuters in May noted the deployment of approximately 1,200 Wagner Group PMCs in support of the LNA in Libya.

In a separate report, the US Department of Defense (Pentagon) published its Lead Inspector General report on East Africa and North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operations, covering Q2 2020 from 01 April to 30 June. The report assesses 3000 fighters affiliated to Russian Wagner Group and 2000 Russia-backed Syrian fighters have been deployed in-country over the reporting period, according to US AFRICOM. Previous estimates of Syrian fighters supporting the LNA ranged between 300-400 former Syrian opposition rebels from Quneitra. The report adds that Turkey deployed more than 5000 Syrian mercenaries to support GNA operations, an increase from the 3800-figure reported Q1. Further, AFRICOM notes a resumption of Islamic State (IS) activity in Libya during the quarter after months of inactivity.

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